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# Multidimensional Approach to Regulation of Political Broadcasting in Nigeria's Media Dynamics: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract:** *This study was carried out to examine the multidimensional approach to political broadcasting in Nigeria's media dynamics. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a qualitative method of inquiry, it was found that the broadcast media are instrumental and they significantly influence political process and activities in Nigeria. Ownership of the broadcast media, as found in this study, is diverse as it is both private and public and political players and actors have tremendous influence on the editorial contents of political broadcasting in Nigeria. As a result, regulation of political broadcasting is sacrosanct to ensure high professionalism among broadcasters and both internal and external measures exist to achieve that desired level of professionalism. However, the broadcast media do not achieve the desired level of professionalism in political broadcasts due to lack of strict adherence to the internal and external provisions regulating the system and a weak or lack of enforcement of such provisions among regulators in Nigeria. It noted that the current media environment and system have made it difficult for the practice of only self-regulation of political media broadcasts since it can amount to more abuses and misconduct in the system. The advent of new technology which brought about social media has made the task of political broadcasting among broadcast media owners and professionals more demanding in achieving high professionalism in political broadcasts. The study concluded that a multidimensional approach to the regulation of political broadcasting is to achieve high professionalism but intervening factors impede strict adherence to provisions in such approaches and desired professionalism in political broadcasting in Nigeria. It recommended, among other things, that internal and external challenges impeding, frustrating and truncating must be addressed through effective and realistic reforms if the broadcast industry must achieve high professionalism in political broadcasts in Nigeria. Self-regulations should continue to converge and coexist with external regulations in political broadcasting to curtail the abuses and misconduct which may likely come as a result of the application of only one.*

**Keywords:** *Multidimensional Approach, Media Regulations, Broadcast Political Reporting, Critical Discourse Analytical Inquiry*

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## **Introduction**

Media rights, responsibility and regulations are critical elements of mass media operations and practice globally. From the authoritarian to libertarian systems, the mass media practice has never been without certain legal and institutional regulations and controls. Such regulations and controls, according to scholars, are to ensure the preservation of public order and the safety of the state; preservation of respect for ethical conduct in affairs of taste and manners; accomplishing gains to the political square based on information flow, access, variability and public engagement; preservation of cultural norms and promotion of regional or national tradition and language; respect for freedom of expression and preservation from insults and prejudices among others (Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola, 2021).

In all societies, regulation of media organizations and the market has been envisaged as a contested area generating heated debates, as mass media and other means of communication have traditionally run counter to the interests of elites in democratic societies (DiCola, 2009; McChesney, 2008; Mendel, 2014; Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola, 2021; Rasul & McDowell, 2012). It has been observed that in developing countries such as ours, where deregulation of electronic media and its regulation are nascent experiences, communication regulation grows even more complex. With the introduction of advanced communication technologies, new regulatory challenges emerge that require decision-making and regulatory policies that can best serve the interests of citizens (Akinreti, 2017; Rasul & McDowell, 2012).

It is observed, therefore, that because the broadcast media can affect people's thinking and behaviour to a remarkable extent, both for the good and for bad, harnessing its power to work for the democratic process is one of the key purposes of broadcasting regulation (Curran, 2002; Salomon, 2009). There are observations that sometimes restricting content can be a means of protecting citizens from harmful material, but it has also been used as a means of restricting access to news and information in order to maintain strict government control to prevent opposition views and opinions being heard (Salomon, 2009).

Nigeria guarantees freedom of expression under section 39(1) of its 1999 Constitution which provides that *“every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference”*. Yet, Section 45 (1) (a & b) empowers a regulatory body to carefully regulate broadcasting in Nigeria by providing that *‘Nothing in sections 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 of this Constitution shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society; (a) in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality or public health; or (b) for the purpose of protecting the rights and freedom of other persons.*

There are different approaches to broadcast media regulations across the world, including Nigeria, yet the issue of which particular one is ideal has been contentious over the years. According to Fentuck (1999) in Okore (2014), the regulation of broadcast media practice takes many forms, ranging from clauses in national constitutions and laws to administrative procedures and technical specifications. Regulation can be internal or external. The former case refers to self-regulation where internal controls are applied, sometimes in response to public pressure or criticism from outside (Fentuck, 1999 in Okore, 2014). For Nordenstron & White (2011), regulation of the media normally takes place within a broader framework of principle and policy.

The issue of political broadcasting has generated serious debates in global media discourse and will continue to do so for a long time to come. This is probably because the media, particularly the broadcast media provide people with congenial templates to discuss, reflect on or get apprised of issues of socio-political development and socioeconomic advancement of nations in contemporary times. In striving to achieve this, broadcast journalists, aside from confronting the daunting task of political coverage and reportage, are believed to have had to contend with certain challenges that are thrown up by the prevailing socio-political and socioeconomic circumstances in the societies (media cultures) they operate in (Croteau & Hoynes, 2000; Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola 2021; Salomon, 2009). A report by Sean McBride Commission cited in Shem (2018, p.3) revealed that “news has become a commercial product; important developments especially in the countryside are pushed aside by unimportant or even trivial news items, concerning urban events and the activities of personalities” (p. 3). Cases of biased political programmes and other unethical commercials, violation of human rights, interference of politicians in broadcast stations, unbalanced reporting, inciting statements and serious misdemeanor, biased reporting and much more are observed to have filled the broadcast airwaves. Mass media, being a part of society, are also observed to have been polluted by the prevailing societal ills, such as corruption, bribery and grafts. The broadcast media stations in specific seem to have derailed from enlightening the public because of monetization of their services (Idemudia, 2008; Beli & Inuwa, 2010).

This study critically examines the multidimensional approaches to regulation of broadcast political reporting in Nigeria’s media dynamics.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The overall objective of this paper is to critically examine the multidimensional approach to regulation of political broadcasting in Nigeria’s media dynamics. The paper specifically looks at:

- i. The concept of broadcast media regulation.
- ii. Nature of broadcast media system in Nigeria.
- iii. Broadcast media regulation in Nigeria.
- iv. Regulations of Political Broadcasting in Nigeria
- v. Theoretical framework
- vi. Empirical justifications
- vii. Discussion/Conclusion

### **Broadcast Media Regulation**

Regulation is part of the media practice all over the world and it refers to the whole process of control or guidance, by established rules and procedures, applied by governments and other political and administrative authorities to all kinds of media practices and activities. Thus, regulation is always a potential intervention in ongoing activities, usually for some stated “public interest” goal but also to serve the needs of the market like supporting competition or for reasons of technical efficiency (Fentuck, 1999 in Okore, 2014). Bringing the concept into perspective, Harvey (1999) in Ihechu & Okugo (2013, p. 13) states:

Regulation involves intervention by the state in areas of economic, social or cultural life according to whatever political norms are characteristic of that nation state. Regulations may be issued by presidential decree, by religious prescription or by legislative action within a system of representative democracy.

Today, there is hardly any profession that does not deserve to be regulated by laws and ethics. The reason is that no matter how good a profession is to the society, some unscrupulous individuals will use it in a negative manner which may cause harm to the society it is supposed to defend and protect. Mass media just like others is not excluded from regulation. Regulation means that journalists are checked by laws and ethics. Specifically, regulation according to Malemi (1999) in Abubakar (2017) comes in the form of constitutional provision, statutes, ethical guidelines, and informal restraints. These regulations embody mass communication law, media law and press law which often used interchangeably to mean:

The law governing the receiving and dissemination of ideas and information, the media of mass communication, the role of press and the writing public, their rights and their duties to the private individual and the state in general (p. 10).

Regulation takes many forms, ranging from clauses in national constitutions and laws to administrative procedures and technical specifications. Generally, the different forms of regulations that exist worldwide fall under two categories, including internal or self-regulations and external regulations. And the extent of control measures existent in each country depends on the country's political system and environment (Fentuck, 1999 in Okore, 2014; Kemal, 2002; McChesney, 2008; Nwosu, 2003).

**Self-Regulations** include the formal codes or standards of ethical behaviour established in most countries to aid practitioners of all major groups of media professionals in their moral reasoning (Nwosu, 2003). According to Haraszti (2008):

Media self-regulation is a joint endeavour by media professionals to set up voluntary editorial guidelines and abide by them in a learning process open to the public. By doing so, the independent media accept their share of responsibility for the quality of public discourse in the nation, while fully preserving their editorial autonomy in shaping it (p. 9).

Self-regulation is not censorship and not even self-censorship. It is about establishing minimum principles on ethics, accuracy, personal rights and so on, while fully preserving editorial freedom on what to report and what opinions to express (Haraszti, 2008).

In Nigeria, these are: The Nigerian Code of Advertising Practice, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, Code of Ethics, and Nigerian Press Organization Code of conduct, etc these are prescriptive codes that tell media practitioners what they should do. To some, these codes are a necessary part of a true profession; to others, they are little more than unenforceable collections of clichés that restrict constitutional rights and invite lawsuits from outsiders (Nwosu, 2003).

In addition to professional codes, many media organizations have formulated their own institutional policies for conduct. These are policy books and editorial policies which spell out standards for everyday operations and identify company positions on specific issues. Many media organizations in developed countries also utilize 'Ombudspersons' -practitioners internal to the company who serve as "judges" in disputes between the public and the organization. Some media organizations subscribe to the small number of people from both the media and the public who investigate complaints against the media from the public and publish their findings (Nwosu, 2003).

These mechanisms of normative ethics according to Nwosu (2003) are a form of self -regulation, designed in part to forestall more rigorous or intrusive government regulation. In a democracy dependent on mass communication they serve an important function. Media practitioners are suspicious of excessive government involvement in the-industry. Self regulation, however, as Nwosu (2003) observes, has certain limitations:

- i. Media professionals are reluctant to identify and censure colleagues who transgress. To do so might appear to be admitting that problems exist; whistle - blowers in the profession are often met with hostility from their peers.
- ii. The standards for conduct and codes of behaviour are abstract and ambiguous. Many media professionals see this flexibility as a necessary evil; freedom and autonomy are essential. Others believe the lack of rigorous standards renders the codes useless.
- iii. As opposed to those in other professions, media practitioners are not subject to standards of professional training and licensing. Again, some practitioners view standards of training and licensing limiting media freedom and inviting government control. Others argue that licensing has had these effects on doctors and lawyers.
- iv. Media practitioners often have limited independent control over their work. Media professionals are not autonomous, individual professionals. They are part of large, hierarchically structured organizations. Therefore, it is often difficult to punish violations of standards because of the difficulty in fixing responsibility.

But Haraszti (2008) believes that by promoting standards, self-regulation helps maintain the media's credibility with the public. This is particularly welcome in new democracies, most of which are also new to an independent press. Media self-regulation helps convince the public that the free media are not irresponsible. At the same time, self-regulation protects the right of journalists to be independent, and to be judged for professional mistakes not by those in power but by their colleagues. When it comes to correcting factual errors or violations of personal rights by the press, satisfaction over the judgments of self-regulatory bodies lessens pressure on the judiciary system to sanction journalists (Haraszti, 2008). Haraszti (2008) enumerates five reasons for the media to develop media self-regulation:

- i. It preserves editorial freedom;
- ii. It helps to minimize state interference;
- iii. It promotes media quality;
- iv. It is evidence of media accountability;
- v. It helps readers access the media.

**External-Regulations** Most of the external regulatory controls on the media are adopted by governments in form of laws and legislative actions. In spite of this, governments set up commissions to issue licenses and define modes of operations for media organizations. Examples are the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in Nigeria. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in America. Other pressures on the media include political influences (Ihechu&Okugo, 2013; Nwosu, 2003).

Moreover, consumers and advertisers can react against breaches of ethics by the press through complaining to an existing media council, whose responsibilities include receiving complaints about media performance, investigating such complaints and publishing their findings. By doing so, the ethical behaviour of media practitioners gets enhanced (Nwosu, 2003). Press laws in Nigeria comprise of law of defamation, laws of privacy, law of sedition, and law against classified matter. Journalists in the country strive to work within the confines of these laws so as not to clash with government or with individuals' rights (Nwosu, 2003).

Commissions also exist in some countries to aid the government in regulating the mass media system. Some of them as earlier stated are National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in Nigeria established by the Federal Military government on August 24<sup>th</sup> 1992 under Decree No. 38, Federal Communication Commission (FCC) created under the American Commission in 1914 by the FTC Act., "objectives of these commissions are expressly stated in the Acts. Governments use commission subtly to infringe on the rights of the media practitioners. According to Ihechu&Okugo (2013, p. 13), regulations may be administered directly by the government, as it was in Nigeria before 1992. It could also be through statutory agencies that enjoy some degree of independence from government. This is exemplified by National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, of Nigeria; the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, of USA; and Independent Television Commission, ITC, of Britain (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013, p. 13).

Some scholars (Kemal, 2002; McChesney, 2008; Napoli, 2003; Robinson & Crenshaw, 2002) are of the view that the regulatory bodies begin their work enthusiastically to reform media firms, but as time passes, they become inefficient by indulging in bureaucratic routines and begin to safeguard the interests of political and economic elite who use different tactics to cajole regulators. Government pressure and private sector bribes are the most common strategies used by interest groups to get business-friendly laws enacted (Ali & Gunaratne, 2000; Cheema, 2011; Khan, 2008; Kumar & Thomas, 2006; Napoli, 2003; Naseer, 2010; Rantanen, 2007; Rasul & McDowell, 2012).

A number of formal and informal controls, both external and internal to the media industry, are aimed at ensuring that media professionals operate in an ethical manner consistent with Social responsibility theory. The formal controls which are external regulators' measures are laws and regulations-codified statements of what can and can't be done and what content is permissible and not permissible, and industry codes practice. Among the informal controls consisting of external regulatory measures are pressure groups, consumers and advertisers (Nwosu, 2003).

### **Nature of Broadcast Media in Nigeria**

The broadcast media are channels of communication that the audiences are always interested in identifying with for information, entertainment and education. Broadcasting has been defined as the transmission of information through radio waves from a radio or television station, to the audience in far and near places, through their receivers, which help in decoding such information (Asodike & Udoh, 2014; Onabajo, 2000). The broadcast media are the creative channels of communication, characterized by professionalism, choice and innovation, to serve the interest of the public. Their utilisation of audio and video technology make them capable of reaching the mass audience simultaneously, availing mankind with the best means of information dissemination and reception. They also enable the individuals to share in and contribute to the best of their ability, to the world around them (NBC, 2016).

Broadcasting shall influence society positively, setting the agenda for the social, cultural, economic, political and technological development of a nation, for the public good. By means of broadcasting, every Nigerian is expected to partake in the sharing of ideas and experiences that will enrich the life of the citizenry and help them live in a complex, dynamic and humane society, as stated in the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy set out in Chapter two of the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria {as amended}* {hereinafter referred to as the Constitution} (NBC, 2016).

Nigerian broadcasting shall essentially match the best in the profession anywhere in the world, yet be distinctly Nigerian, projecting the best and discouraging the worst in the society. In other words, the cardinal responsibility of broadcasting to inform, educate and entertain shall not be at the expense of national interest, unity and cohesion of Nigeria's diverse social, cultural, economic, political and religious configurations. Therefore, no broadcast is expected to encourage or incite to crime, lead to public disorder, be repugnant to public feeling or contain an offensive reference to any person, alive or dead, or generally, be disrespectful to human dignity (NBC, 2016).

Historically, the coming of BBC Empire service in 1932 marked the beginning of broadcasting in Nigeria. The Empire service which utilized radio signal Re-diffusion Service, RDS, was designed to enhance economic, political and cultural relationship between Britain and its colonies. The outfit became Nigeria Broadcasting service, NBS, in 1951 (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013). Furthermore, ordinance No. 39 of 1956 enabled the conversion of NBS to Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation NBC, on April 1, 1957. The same act provided for the external service of NBC, the Voice of Nigeria, which began operation on January 1, 1962. However, the three regions established TV stations as follows: West (WNTV: 1959); East (ENBS-TV: 1960); and North (RKTV: 1962). In 1979, all the regional radio stations came under one umbrella: Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (Betiang, 2006). Prior to that time the regional TV stations were harmonized to become Nigerian Television Authority, NTA, in 1976 (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013; Owuamalam, 2006).

All along the ownership, control and operation of broadcasting in Nigeria were preserved exclusively for the various governments- Federal, Regional, and State (Media Rights Agenda, MRA, 2001 in Chioma, 2014). In 1992, the Deregulation of Broadcasting Decree No.38 was

promulgated by the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. The expression of that presidential *ipse dixit* which established the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, also created a new pattern of ownership and control as well as injected competition in the broadcast industry (Ihechu&Okugo, 2013). The deregulation of the broadcast media set in motion genuine competition for supremacy and survival of the fittest syndrome among old as well as new operators in the field. This brought hope for rapid development of the industry through: modernization and accessibility to a wide reach of information for both media professionals and the public which would not have been made possible if the government was still in total control of the media (Media Rights Monitor, 1997 in Chioma, 2014).

The deregulation of broadcasting did not only terminate the government monopoly of broadcasting in Nigeria, but opened doors for private participation through ownership and operation in the sector. By the deregulation, the broadcast media automatically became divided into two broad categories of: Public and Commercial owned media. While the public included all federal and state owned radio and television stations, the commercial media included all radio and television stations owned and managed by individuals, groups of individuals, and organizations (Chioma, 2014). Corroborating, NBC (2009, p.2) submits that “as a result of the revolution in the Nigeria broadcast industry, the number of broadcasting stations in Nigeria has, at the last count, risen to 394, from less than 30 before deregulation” (Ihechu&Okugo, 2013).

### **Broadcast Media Regulation in Nigeria**

Regulation is an essential part of the broadcast media culture in developed and developing nations of the world. Regulation normally takes place within a broader framework of principles and policies (Nordenstron & White, 2011). According to Siebert et al (1956) as cited in Okore (2014) in their book *Four Theories of the press*, the state takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. The press and other media, in their view, will reflect the basic beliefs and assumptions that the society holds. In western liberal tradition, this refers to matters such as freedom, equality before the law, social solidarity and cohesion, cultural diversity, active participation and social responsibility. Different cultures may have different principles and priorities.

Although normative theory of the press is now in a considerable state of uncertainty, Nerone (1995) in Okore (2014) identifies certain broad traditions of thought about the rights and responsibilities of media in the society and the degree to which the society may legitimately intervene to protect the public interest. The main relevant variants are Authoritarian theory, free press theory, social responsibility theory, alternative media theory and development media theory. If there is going to be regulation, then there needs to be someone with the legal authority to do it: a regulator. There are three options: regulation done by an independent regulator; regulation done through a government minister and his/her department, and regulation by the courts (Okore, 2014). Job (2014), lists sources of regulations to include: government agencies; professional organization; commercial lobbies; licensing; content monitoring; sanction process; arbitration and other control loopholes; non- governmental organization; and laws.

With digitization, convergence, and globalization, the borders between broadcasting and other communications have become increasingly blurred, but the systems have retained their main characteristics (Skogerbø, 2015). Clive (2016) explains that:

Contrary to the general view, regulation can be the defender of free speech and the forces of the marketplace the chief threat to a plurality of view. But new technologies demand new forms of regulation and government intervention may be the best way of ensuring the plurality of voice on which democracy depends (p. 61).

The claim that technology makes regulation of the broadcast media more difficult, even impossible, is enduring human fallacy. On the contrary, it makes it easier. At the heart of satellite and cable technology instincts which drive is a highly sophisticated subscription payment media organisations system. Any interruption to the flow of funds to the broadcasters would quickly lead to blank screens. The threat from pirate satellite broadcasters is greatly exaggerated; international regulation, for instance the European Union's steps towards a comprehensive media policy, is likely to thwart such endeavours. Rapid and complex technical change(s) should not divert governments from addressing the more predictable consequences of the enduring and straightforward human instincts which drive media organisations. The quest for market domination and the desire to wield influence and control are familiar and enduring characteristics of these organisations. Governments must defend the public interest by protecting and sustaining freedom of expression, diversity of view, plurality of ownership and consumer choice, safe in the knowledge that media (Clive, 2016).

Apart from government regulation of the broadcast media, there is also self regulation which is really about establishing minimal ethical principles so that journalists meet the highest professional standards which allow them to be held accountable. It is a professional media which can be entrusted by the public and could make reasonable public demands. A media which is distinguished by sanctions is also perceived as unethical and thus not trustworthy (Olagoke, O. I., Olatunji & Adunola, 2021). Self-regulation stimulates the media to react to genuine issues and thus effect corrections on the mistakes and shortcomings which are significant public issues. It is a responsibility by value conscious media practitioners to behave themselves and build dialogue with the public professionally (Encyclopedia of Communication and Information, 2017).

According to Haraszti (2008) in Jasper (2017) media self regulation is a joint endeavor by media professionals to set up voluntary editorial guidelines and abide by them in a learning process open to the public. By doing so, the independent media accept their share of responsibility for the quality of public discourse in the nation, while fully preserving their editorial autonomy in shaping it (Jasper, 2017). Jasper (2017) argues that self-regulation is not censorship and not even self- censorship. It is about establishing minimum principles in ethics, accuracy, personal rights etc. while fully presenting editorial freedom on what to report and what opinions to express. Haraszti (2008) in Jasper (2017) emphasized that by promoting standards, self- regulation helps maintain the media credibility with the public. It helps convince the public that the free media are not irresponsible. She goes further to explain that self- regulation protects

the right of journalists to be independent, and to be judged for professional mistakes not by those in power but by their colleagues (Haraszti, 2008 in Jasper, 2017).

It is believed that in order to keep outside regulation at a minimum, the broadcasting industry undertakes measures of self-regulation, including voluntary programming ratings; voluntary screening of violent, indecent, and otherwise inappropriate programme content; and refusal to accept advertising selling such items as cigarettes and hard liquor. These actions, like those taken under the Codes of Practice of the National Association of Broadcasters in the mid-1900s, have served to restrain the government from regulating what the industry has already been self-regulating (Okwori&Adeyanju, 2006; Olagoke, Olatunji&Adunola, 2021).

Whatever form it may take, the regulation, therefore, is to ensure that broadcasting plays a pivotal role in the social, cultural, technological, economic, and political lives of the people of Nigeria; therefore:

- i. Broadcasting shall adhere to the general principles of legality, decency, truth, integrity and respect for human dignity as well as the cultural, moral and social values of the people within the provisions of the Constitution;
- ii. Nigerian broadcasting shall meet the best professional standards;
- iii. The framework for the regulation of broadcasting in Nigeria shall meet local needs without compromising international standards;
- iv. Broadcasting in Nigeria shall provide the entire range of sound and vision services that cater for, and reflect the diverse range of Nigerian cultures and communities through effective distribution of public, commercial and community broadcasting services;
- v. Broadcasting in Nigeria shall be at least 70% owned and operated by Nigerians.
- vi. Broadcasting shall ensure the protection and the development of women, children and other persons requiring special care and consideration;
- vii. Broadcasting shall be mindful of the degree of harm and offence likely to be caused by the inclusion of any material in programming in general or in specific terms;
- viii. Broadcast frequency bands, a scarce resource, shall be efficiently utilized in line with the international best standards in the planning, co-ordination, assignment, registration, and monitoring of the broadcast spectrum;
- ix. Universal access to broadcasting, including technologies, content and services shall be promoted;
- x. Providers of broadcasting services shall respect community standards in the provision of programme materials;
- xi. Broadcasters shall establish the mechanism for addressing complaints as well as feedback;
- xii. Broadcasters and their employees shall uphold the rights and obligations of the mass media as provided in the Constitution;
- xiii. Fair and sustainable competition shall be the hallmark of the broadcast industry in Nigeria;
- xiv. Self-regulation shall be employed within the framework of professional standards (NBC, 2016).

## **Regulations of Political Broadcasting in Nigeria**

The broadcast media are important platforms where politicians market themselves and their manifestos to members of the public. The broadcast media create and promote political awareness amongst the people in order to achieve a democratic society; inculcate in the people the spirit of tolerance of all shades of opinion; and promote social justice based on the responsibilities and rights of the individuals in the society (NBC, 2016). Because of the way politics constitutes an important part of development in the society, the NBC (2016) provides the following as guidelines in the coverage of political programmes:

- (a) A Political programme shall observe the provisions of the Code, and other extant laws relating to broadcasting;
- (b) A political broadcast shall be the production of the Broadcaster except advertisements, promos and collaborative productions supervised by relevant organisations.
- (c) A Broadcaster shall:
  - i. Carry out its civic responsibility of broadcasting all aspects of political enlightenment.
  - ii. avoid inflammatory and divisive matter in its provocative form in using political material for News;
  - iii. In adherence to the principles of pluralism, accord equal airtime to all political parties or views, with particular regard to the amount of time and belt, during political campaign periods;
  - iv. Regularly announce that every Political Party is entitled to equitable air-time during political campaign periods.
  - v. ensure a political broadcast is in decent language f. ensure a partisan political broadcast is one in which the political party seeks to explain only its manifesto and programmes
  - vi. ensure that a political broadcast is clearly identified as such, and not presented in a manner that would mislead the audience to believe that the programme is of any other type;
  - vii. ensure that at campaign periods, a Log book is kept by an officer not below the level of a “Controller” or equivalent, showing the allocation of News, Programmes and commercial air-time to each party with dates, titles and other information as may be requested by the Commission;
  - viii. ensure that a partisan political broadcast is recorded off air and preserved for at least 90 days after first broadcast; ‘
  - ix. ensure that the broadcast of a partisan political campaign, jingle, announcement, and any other form of partisan party identification or symbol ends not later than twenty-four hours before polling day;
  - x. not use any vote obtained at different polling stations or from exit polls, to project or speculate on the chances of the candidates;
  - xi. relay election results or declaration of the winner only as announced by the authorized electoral officer for the election;
  - xii. set up a standing Electoral Complaints Committee to resolve all disputes within 24 hours of receipt of the complaint;

- xiii. forward the Committee's report in paragraph 5.3.3.m to the Commission within 48 hours
  - xiv. not commercialize political news;
  - xv. not broadcast political jingles exceeding 60 seconds In exceptional circumstances, a government functionary may perform a service relating to his office, within the 24-hour campaign restriction period provided there is no display of partisanship.
- (d) While a Broadcaster may interact with politicians in the course of professional duties, this shall not lead a reasonable person to believe that he is either a member or sympathizer of any political party.
- (e) A Broadcaster shall ensure that in programmes requiring the representation of Political parties or affiliations, the panelist shall be of comparable status and relevance.
- (f) A Broadcaster shall implement the appropriate decisions, including the grant of a *Right of Reply* or *Apology*, within 24 hours, and at the same level of prominence.

In the United States for instance, it is required that in recognition of the vital role that broadcasting plays in the electoral process, the Communications Act and the Commission's rules impose specific obligations on broadcasters regarding political advertising (The Media Bureau Federal Communications Commission, 2019).

Onwubiko, (2015) in Abubakar, Ahmad & Yushau (2021) states that, during political mobilization in Nigeria, political parties are usually in hot pursuit of prime time on the air waves and this puts a lot of pressure on massing stations, which cannot operate beyond 24 hours in a day, unlike the print media which can easily increase pagination to accommodate pressure of space. Yet the mass media is still expected to be fair to all. In order to address this challenge, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), a body statutorily responsible for monitoring operations of electronic media institutions, introduced what it called "Nigeria Broadcasting Code", stipulating the standards for broadcast media practice in Nigeria.

In all societies, politics is known to be a mechanism through which the administrative and legislative settings for the running of the society are made possible (Mbuk, 2005). Communication is part of the political process and Politicians, therefore, utilize any medium which they feel would enable them to reach out to the electorate for the purpose of manipulating their minds in favour of a given political party or candidate. The broadcast media are, as such, regarded as effective in reaching out to the mass audience (Mbuk, 2005). But for the broadcast media to effectively contribute to the development of national unity and participatory democracy, therefore, the political objectives of broadcasting as required by the NBC (2016) should:

- i. Create and promote political awareness amongst the people in order to achieve a democratic society;
- ii. Inculcate in the people the spirit of tolerance of all shades of opinion; and
- iii. Promote social justice based on the responsibilities and rights of the individuals in the society.

Therefore, the regulation of broadcast media political broadcasts implies that broadcasting of such programmes are done with a high level of professionalism. Kužel (2020) attests that during elections, media monitoring provides benchmarks to judge the fairness of the election process. It assesses the behaviour of the media during various phases of the election process and evaluates their compliance with international standards and local regulations on election coverage. It helps to establish whether the candidates are given equitable access to media to convey their messages to voters and whether information available through the media is adequate for voters to make a well-informed choice at the ballot box (p. 9). Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola (2021) underscored that the main issues of media regulation were: preservation of public order and the safety of the state; preserving respect for ethical conduct in affairs of taste and manners; accomplishing gains to the political square based on information flow, access, variability and public engagement; preserving cultural norms and promoting regional or national tradition and language; and respect for freedom of expression and preservation from insults and prejudices (Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola, 2021).

Haraszti (2008) enumerates five reasons for self-regulation of the media thus:

- i. Preservation of editorial freedom;
- ii. Minimization of the state interference;
- iii. Promotion of media quality;
- iv. Enhance media accountability;
- v. Help readers have more access to the media.

Despite several measures to regulate political broadcasting, broadcast stations in Nigeria, as scholars believed, have been accused in several cases of unprofessional and unethical conducts over the years. Cases of biased political programmes and other unethical commercials, violation of human rights, interference of politicians in broadcast stations, unbalanced reporting, inciting statements and serious misdemeanor, biased reporting and much more have filled the broadcast airwaves. Mass media, being a part of society, have been polluted by the prevailing societal ills, such as corruption, bribery and grafts. The broadcast media stations in specific seem to have derailed from enlightening the public because of monetization of their services (Idemudia, 2008; Innocent, Adaeze & Udoh, 2022; Beli & Inuwa, 2010).

Incidences of the National Broadcasting Commission sanctioning or closing broadcast stations for violation of provisions in their code of conduct relating to political broadcasting in Nigeria abound. On March 2, 2019 it was reported that the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has sanctioned 45 broadcast stations with a fine of N500, 000 each for breaching the code of conduct on electioneering broadcast. The Commission said it sanctioned stations who allowed politicians to make abusive, inciting and provocative statements during rallies (Sahara Reporters, March 2, 2019).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Responsibility Media Theory**

The Social Responsibility theory on the other hand was propounded by F.S. Siebert, T.B. Peterson and W. Schramm in 1963. . It is an off-shoot of the Libertarian theory (Okore, 2014). The theory emphasizes the accountability of the media to society. Media are free but they should accept obligations to serve the public good. The means of ensuring compliance with these obligations can either be through professional self-regulation or public intervention or both (Innocent, Adaeze & Udoh, 2022).

The social responsibility theory is relevant to this study because the media, including the broadcast media are to accept and fulfill certain obligations to the society; through professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance, these obligations can be met; the media should regulate itself within the framework of law and established institutions to be able to carry out its responsibilities; that whatever might lead to crime, violence, civil disorder or offence to minority groups should be avoided by the media; that the media should reflect society's plurality, give access to diverse views and grant everyone the right to reply (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2012).

### **Gatekeeping Theory**

Politics in any society has tremendous influence on the overall development and there is no doubt that the media influences the process. And since the media influences the political process (positive or negative), it is expedient that there must be some measures for checking political broadcasts to avoid abuse and misconduct among broadcast media stations. Gatekeeping can be broadly understood as the control of information passing through a gate or filter (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Erzikova, 2018; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Essentially, gatekeeping is judgment or decision making about what information should be gathered, evaluated, and ultimately shared. Since so many practices (journalism, public relations, marketing, advertising, politics, to name a few) disseminate information to engage with important publics across communication networks, the concept of gatekeeping has gained wide application in the communication field. Underlying the theory of gatekeeping is the fundamental assumption that information affects what happens in society and helps shape social reality (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). Whoever controls the flow of information can influence social reality. News organizations are channels; decision points whether a news item would be published/broadcast and how it would be shaped and presented are gates; professional norms are forces; decision makers or policies are gatekeepers (Erzikova, 2018; Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

### **Political Economy of Communication Theory**

The political economy of communication reconnoiters the patterns of production, distribution, and consumption of communication resources in a society and sheds light on the operations of communication business (Mosco, 2008). It is a useful approach to comprehend "the role of media in societies and examine how market structures, policies and subsidies, and organizational

structures shape and determine the nature of media system and media content” (McChesney, 2008, p. 491). By applying a Marxian framework, theorists in this tradition tend to advance a comprehension of the mechanisms of control, which ultimately lead to social transformation and change in assorted societies (Mosco, 2009).

The political economy of communication emphasizes concentration of ownership to examine “how power works in [the] communication industry” (Mosco, 2009, p. 158) and its ramifications for democracy, diversity of content and organizations, the public interest, and the free flow of ideas. Meanwhile, many critics of regulatory regimes in liberal market economies have argued that commercial media corporations serve the commercial interests of investors rather than serving the public interest (Napoli, 2003, 2011). Thus, it has been suggested that it is important to introduce a regulatory regime that could ensure diversity, fair competition, equal chances of growth, and protection of the public interest despite the elusive nature of these normative regulatory goals (Rasul & McDowell, 2012). Common citizens, activists, and civil society groups have limited access to the media sources, and their voices could easily be silenced or marginalized by corporations. As Napoli (2003) argues:

Media organizations are observed to be both political and economic entities. They are able – and even expected – to influence public opinion, government policy and citizen voting behavior.... At the same time, media organizations’ continued existence in a capitalist system such as ours depends upon their ability to maximize revenue and minimize costs. (p. 207).

The communication industry is different from other corporate enterprises as it is intrinsically intertwined with culture, economy, and politics (McChesney, 1999 in Rasul & McDowell, 2012). Thus, regulatory practices in the spectrum of communication could be considered as social as well as economic regulation. Political economists argue that control over patterns of production, distribution, and consumption of cultural products entitles media owners to control the means of communication and, subsequently, public opinion (Bagdikian, 2004; Doyle, 2002; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; McChesney, 1999, 2008; Mosco, 2009; Rasul & Proffitt, 2011; Wasko, 2004). Therefore, the political economy of communication approach is opposite to answer questions dealing with concentration of media ownership and its relationship with regulatory regimes. As regulatory regimes are instituted by governments, political economists argue that the corporate media sector would be the greatest beneficiary of communication regulation due to its political clout, lobbying, expertise, and economic prowess (Rasul & McDowell, 2012).

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopted a critical discourse analytical (CDA) method to examine the multidimensional approach to the regulation of political broadcasting in Nigeria in order to understand how such approaches influence political broadcasting in Nigeria. Multiple evidential documented materials were sourced and analysed through qualitative method.

## **Empirical justifications**

Studies bothering media rights, responsibility and regulation across the globe are many. For instance, In this study which was carried out by Rasheed (2016) it was found that broadcast media embarked on meaningful political awareness and public enlightenment to the Nigerian and did a holistic and thorough analysis of relevant provisions of the constitution as they relate to elections, promotion of public interest and consciousness in participatory elections, organize series of campaigns to educate the citizens on their civic rights and electoral duties. This implies that the broadcast media are an essential part of the political process and they are actually performing the responsibility of providing information to the people that can assist them make appropriate decisions. Nworie (2013) found in a study that radio mobilizational programmes have influenced the people's choice of political participation. Findings also indicated an average exposure rate of respondents to these programmes. Hamid & Aliyu (2017), in their study concluded that political campaign messages aired by local radio stations were an essential factor in the political decisions of the electorates in Kano. A study by Sanusi, Okunade, Ogunbamigbe & Anieudo (2013) revealed that the March 2011 televised presidential debate influenced the voting pattern of Lagosians but that along with the media there other factors such as peer groups, religion, ethnicity, family influence and political parties, responsible for voters' behaviour.

A study conducted by Abubakar, Ahmad & Yushau (2021) has revealed that without a vibrant press and free flow of information, the government cannot fully function to its full potential. It also revealed that freedom of the press is vital to the growth of Nigerians democracy. The study thus recommended that in order to ensure efficient and unbiased political mobilization by the mass media, there should be total autonomy, which will in turn ensure a free and independent press. Kur & Nyekwere (2015), in their study assessed the performances and challenges of television broadcasting in the democratization process in Nigeria and found that the successes achieved by the military governments centre on expansion of the industry while those recorded by the civilian governments had to do with consolidation of the expansion. A study by Oguchi & Dayo (2013) indicated that the media in both Nigeria and Ghana are free but there was self-censorship by the practitioners.

Findings from a study conducted by Okafor (2014) revealed that different levels of government in Nigeria which comprises state and federal governments, serving and retired high level public and private officials, politicians, as well as influential businessmen and women, own most of the media organizations in Nigeria. Apuke (2016) found in a study among other things that media managers are often faced with the dilemma of balancing the media owner's interest and public's interest without infringing on the laws of the land or the ethics of the profession. Whether media ownership is private or public, the interest of the owner plays a dominant role in determining what the media managers do or fail to do.

Chioma (2014), in the study on a comparative evaluation of the pre and post deregulation challenges of broadcasting in Nigeria and found that although the broadcast media industry has expanded in that there was quite a good number of radio and television stations in operations, issues of funding, high cost of generating locally-originated content, regulation, poor

management, poor program quality, the switchover from analogue to digital broadcasting, cultural imperialism, inadequate training of broadcast professionals, and politicization of the broadcast media still posed a challenge to the industry. Azubuike & Ikiriko (2019) similarly found that the private broadcast outfits are faced with challenges arising from poor facilities, government regulation and legislations, expensive equipment, welfare and debts. However, the study discovered that progress could be made if an enabling environment would be created for them to strive.

Mustapha & Auwalu (2019) found in their study that though, a gatekeeping process is put in place to detect breaches to the Nigeria Broadcasting Code at State and Zonal levels, yet NBC seems to use its discretion in using stick and carrot approach to sanctioning defaulting private and public stations or broadcasters, usually in favor of public broadcasters. Oketunmbi (2006 & 2007), studied the gains and pains of liberalization of broadcasting in Nigeria and found that in spite of the obviously inadvertent negative effects of liberalization on the society, accommodation of private participation in broadcasting in Nigeria has brought immense benefits to society in terms of quality, professionalism, and enhancement of democracy. Bello & Ashiru (2022) have examined the extent to which NBC regulates broadcasting in Nigeria and challenges the Commission encountered in regulating broadcasting in the country and found that the NBC has a comprehensive system and legal backing capable of regulating broadcasting in Nigeria. However, it faced a lot of challenges ranging from political interference, corruption, underfunding, dependency, etc.

Similarly, Edu (2020) assessed the roles of the National Broadcasting Commission in enforcing media ethics among broadcast journalists in Ondo state and found that some broadcast journalists have not been giving full adherence to the dictates of the code because the commission saddled with the responsibility of enforcing adherence is yet to be at its best in ensuring full compliance to the provisions of the code. Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola (2021) found that in Nigeria, the media are confronted with political and constitutional restrictions that adversely influence the effectiveness of the mass media in Nigeria, as government and media operators have continuously enacted and exploited the law to their own advantage. Similarly, according to Abubakar (2017), records have shown that some journalists carry-out their duties in an unprofessional way thereby drawing attention to the public domain on questions about the place of professionalism in Nigeria's journalism practice.

Findings from a study by Usman & Isyaku (2017) revealed overwhelmingly that the political class controls and influences the content and operations of broadcast media in the country. Job (2014) examined the implication of National Broadcasting Commission code on broadcast media with focus on AIT Lagos and found that the 2006 NBC ban on the organization affected the organization restructuring, retrenchment of few staff and reduction of image. Mbuba (2018) found in a study that efforts of the national broadcasting commission have been undone by the disorderly conduct of some of the broadcast organizations who pay little attention to the content of the broadcasting code and fed the public with junk information and recommended for the Commission to review its penal aspects of the broadcasting code to ensure that they are qualitative enough to deter the recalcitrant broadcast organizations. Adamu (2020) has revealed in a study that Taraba State Broadcasting Service served as a government mouthpiece at the

detriment of its audience interest. According to that study, economic challenge and political inference were some of the factors that were militating against TSBS compliance to the NBC code of conduct.

A study by Mbuk (2005) revealed that in Nigeria, what can be regarded as political broadcasting policy is found in the National Broadcasting Commission's Broadcasting Code (known as Nigerian Broadcasting Code). However, most Nigerians are not really familiar with what is called Political Broadcasting Policy and so cannot react even if it is isolated. Though broadcasting ownership and control has been deregulated, the various governments in the country still own most of the broadcasting media and therefore continue to affect the contents of political broadcasting. The policy has a lot of loopholes, and lends itself to non-compliance.

Innocent, Adaeze & Udoh (2022) assessed the compliance with the political provisions of Nigeria Broadcasting Code among radio stations in South East Nigeria and found a higher percentage of compliance with the Nigeria broadcasting code among those stations in the area. It was also found that the stations complied with political provisions in the areas of news and current affairs and political jingles. The scholars therefore concluded that there was a high level compliance by radio stations in South East Nigeria with the political provisions of the Nigerian Broadcasting Code. Gainaka, Alsafoff & Ghazali (2020) explored the absence of watchdog journalism in Nigeria broadcast media and came to a conclusion that the absence of watchdog in their media is influenced by the interference of broadcast media owners, enormous economic and commercial pressures on them being a more capital intensive media as well as the failure of broadcast media practitioners to explore the freedom of information Act like their print counterparts do. A study conducted by Popoola (2012) has arrived at the conclusion that the post-election violence which erupted in the old Ondo state was due to non-adherence to the broadcasting code, partisanship and the unprofessional conduct of media men. While Olalekan, Onjefu&Mikaila (2013), concluded in their study that the challenges of the dynamic social forces in the media environment impinging on the operations, creativity and potentials of media operatives should be given adequate attention by the industry's stakeholders.

In other parts of the world, a lot of studies on media rights, responsibility and regulations have also been carried out among different scholars. For instance, Ashirafu's (2019) study on the analysis of the effectiveness of broadcast media regulations in Uganda has revealed that the broadcast media contributed to public skepticism and democratic decay. In Kenya, Okore (2014) recommended in a study an improved protection of the freedom of the media and implementation of the existing regulations in place. In Tanzania, a study conducted by Karol (2013) has revealed that producers and reporters in African PSBs remain dependent and fail to exercise their journalistic and editorial independence in producing and reporting what is suitable for the public. In Hong Kong, a study by Ning (2007) revealed that broadcasting regulation and policies have been in a state of flux for the past decade and the changes were far from over as incidents of breaches of statutory codes in recent years have aroused public attention to the possible adverse impact of content regulation on broadcasting freedom.

In Kenya again, a study by Jasper (2017) revealed that Kenya currently applies two media systems: (a) statutory regulatory system that is applied in two regulatory bodies and (b) Statutory

media self-regulatory system which is applied in one regulatory body. The study recommended that Kenya should apply the statutory media self-regulatory system as it is the best for developing democracies. In Zambia, study by Ndawana, Knowles & Vaughan (2021) revealed that the proposed statutory self-regulatory framework presents more challenges to the media than ever before.

In Botswana, a study conducted by Seunghoon (2021) revealed that the media plays a crucial role in keeping the society well informed about what goes on both within the country and across the world. A study conducted by Bouziane (2018) in the Arab World has questioned whether the regulatory bodies are genuine media reforms meant to liberalize the broadcast sector or pseudo reforms meant to allow the Arab states indirect but total control over broadcasting. The study found that the broadcast reforms were part of what Heydemann calls “authoritarian upgrading.” Arab regimes control media content through repressive laws outside the realm of international norms set up by the United Nations covenant and through regulatory institutions that lack independence. In Malaysia, a study by Chang, Kho, Rudiger & Sascha (2015) has revealed that contrary to the common belief, the public sphere in Malaysia has a strong influence on the regulators as all regulatory bodies act upon public complaints. A comparative analysis of media regulations across the world by Tulishree (2018) and argued through the findings that the rationales for regulation (why regulate?) and the objectives of regulation (with what end in mind?) have been insufficiently addressed. Hence, the sophisticated regulatory mechanisms, according to the study, have failed to sustain the clear goals of the mass media across the globe.

In Pakistan, a study by Rasul & McDowell (2012) has concluded that owner-friendly policies of PEMRA and its inefficiency in implementing its mandate have resulted in the concentration of ownership, which facilitated diagonal growth of a handful of companies that control the airwaves in the Pakistani media industry.

In South Africa and the United Kingdom, a study by Itanyi, Lawal-Arowolo & Kouletakis (2021) revealed that the amended provisions of the 6th NBC Code goes against the provisions of the Copyright Act and appears unfair and unreasonable. It is recommended that the Code be revised to reflect the protection which the Copyright Act intends while still maintaining the objectives of the amended Code. Hills (2003) has studied the regulatory models for broadcasting in Africa and found that it was necessary to regulate broadcasting and that regulation must exist within a policy context that has defined goals about the structure of the broadcasting system. A critical issue, according to the study, was the viability and affordability of regulatory agencies in the African context, where financial and human resources are a constraint. Ineffective regulation as the study concluded, stifles the growth of the broadcasting sector and trump's policy goals.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The broadcast media are instrumental and they significantly influence political process and activities in Nigeria. Studies by Abubakar, Ahmad & Yushau (2021), Hamid & Aliyu (2017), Kur & Nyekwere (2015), Mbuk (2005), Nworie (2013), and Rasheed (2016) among others have shown how the broadcast media influenced political process and activities at different places and levels in Nigeria.

Ownership of the broadcast media is diverse as it is both private and public and political players and actors have tremendous influence on the editorial contents of political broadcasts in Nigeria. Apuke (2016) and Okafor (2014) among others have shown that ownership of broadcast media in Nigeria is diverse and how political actors influence the broadcasting of political programmes in Nigeria.

Regulation of the broadcast media political broadcasts is to ensure high professionalism among broadcasters and both internal and external measures exist to achieve that desired level of professionalism. This finding is closely links to gatekeeping, social responsibility and political economy of communication theories as both of them show how regulations of the media are done in different ways (Bagdikian, 2004; Doyle, 2002; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Hills, 2003; Mosco, 2009; Rasul&Proffitt, 2011; Wasko, 2004).

The broadcast media do not achieve the desired level of professionalism in political broadcasts due to lack of strict adherence to the internal and external provisions regulating the system and weak or lack of enforcement of such provisions among regulators in Nigeria. Studies by Abubakar (2017); Adamu (2020); Bello & Ashiru (2022); Edu (2020); Gainaka, Alsagoff&Ghazali (2020); Innocent, Adaeze & Udoh (2022); Job (2014); Mbuba (2018); Mbuk (2005); Mustapha & Auwalu (2019); Oketunmbi (2006 & 2007); Olagoke, Olatunji&Adunola (2021); Olalekan, Onjefu & Mikaila (2013); Popoola (2012); and Usman &Isyaku (2017) among others have shown broadcast media are regulated regulators and the level of successes achieved in Nigeria.

There are a lot of internal and external challenges which are impeding, frustrating and truncating the achievement of high professionalism in political broadcasts among regulators and the broadcasters in Nigeria. Studies by Hills (2003), Mbuk (2005), Olalekan, Onjefu & Mikaila (2013), Rasul & McDowell (2012) and Tulishree (2018) are among studies that identify such factors impeding on the broadcasters and broadcast media regulators towards the achievement of high professionalism in political broadcasting in Nigeria and even elsewhere in the world.

Current media environment and system have made it difficult for the practice of only self-regulation of political media broadcasts since it can amount to more abuses and misconduct in the system. Studies by Jasper (2017), Olagoke, Olatunji&Adunola (2021), Okwori & Adeyanju (2006), Olagoke, Olatunji & Adunola (2021) have shown in different ways how self-regulation is practiced in the media.

The advent of new technology which brought about social media has made the task of political broadcasting among broadcast media owners and professionals more demanding in achieving high professionalism in political broadcasts. Studies by Clive (2016), and Skogerbø (2015) demonstrated how technology has posed a challenge to broadcasters.

Finally, the multidimensional approaches to the regulation broadcast media political broadcasts is to achieve high professionalism but intervening factors impede strict adherent to provisions in such approaches and desired professionalism in political broadcasts among broadcasters in Nigeria

## **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following are recommended:

- i. Stakeholders (broadcasters, broadcast media owners and regulators, politicians, etc) should be mindful of influencing political broadcast contents for their advantage due to the overwhelming negative impact of such influence on the political process and by extension the development of the society.
- ii. Broadcast media regulators (internal and external) should improve the level of their regulations of the broadcast media to enhance high professionalism in broadcasting for political mobilization and development. Where violation of the provisions in the regulation is made, there should be strict punishment and there should be equity and justice in doing so.
- iii. Internal and external challenges impeding, frustrating and truncating must be addressed through effective and realistic reforms if the broadcast industry must achieve high professionalism in political broadcasts in Nigeria.
- iv. Self-regulations should continue to converge and coexist with external regulations in political broadcasting to curtail the level of abuses and misconduct which may likely come as a result of the application of only one.
- v. The advent of new technology should not be a yardstick among regulators and broadcasters to allow misconducts in the system but must keep pace with the changing trend ensuring that professionalism in political broadcasting is not compromised.

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